

# 'I didn't realise the variety of people that are climbers': a sociological exploration of young women's propensities to engage in indoor rock climbing

Jack Ryan Hewitt & Nollaig McEvilly

To cite this article: Jack Ryan Hewitt & Nollaig McEvilly (2021): 'I didn't realise the variety of people that are climbers': a sociological exploration of young women's propensities to engage in indoor rock climbing, *Leisure Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/02614367.2021.2006280](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2021.2006280)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2021.2006280>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 02 Dec 2021.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 908



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

# 'I didn't realise the variety of people that are climbers': a sociological exploration of young women's propensities to engage in indoor rock climbing

Jack Ryan Hewitt and Nollaig McEvilly 

Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Chester, Chester, UK

## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the increasingly popular leisure pursuit of indoor rock climbing amongst young women in the UK. Adopting a Bourdieusian perspective, we draw on the concepts of field, habitus and capital to explore the factors associated with young women's propensities to start, and continue, engaging in this activity. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 12 women (aged 18–25), who had been regularly engaging in indoor climbing for at least six months. Thematic analysis of the transcripts led to the construction of three themes: pre-conceptions of a masculine field; habitual feelings of intimidation and inferiority; and deploying and accruing 'climbing capital'. The findings indicate that climbing's deep-rooted classification as a 'man's sport' initially facilitated feelings of intimidation and inferiority amongst the women, inhibiting their propensity to participate. However, having been introduced to climbing (often by men, such as their boyfriends or brothers), the women found that the social aspects of the activity, along with the sense of achievement they felt when participating, meant they re-evaluated their preconceptions of the field. Their access to various forms of capital facilitated their continued engagement in the field.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 15 July 2021  
Accepted 3 November 2021

## KEYWORDS

Bouldering; Bourdieu; qualitative; leisure; sport; physical activity

## Background

A notable trend in Western leisure cultures is the increasing popularity of individualistic and informal sports, often labelled as adventure, alternative, action or lifestyle activities (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2016; O'Connor & Penney, 2021). Such activities (e.g. rock climbing, parkour, snowboarding) involve growing numbers of girls and women (Gilchrist & Wheaton, 2016). However, the outdoor adventure field continues to be male-dominated (Warren, 2015), with the activity central to the current paper – rock climbing – being no exception to this observation (Bunn, 2017; Wigglesworth, 2021).

Rock climbing is an increasingly popular leisure activity amongst men and women in the UK (Hall & Doran, 2020). The various forms of the activity include traditional climbing, and the newer disciplines of sport climbing and bouldering, which can be performed on natural rock or artificial surfaces (Woollings et al., 2015). Sport climbing, which usually features routes up to 30 m high, involves the climber being attached to a rope either anchored at the top (top roping) or clipped onto bolts along the route using quickdraws (lead climbing) (Woollings et al., 2015). Bouldering involves shorter routes and the use of safety mats, rather than ropes (Woollings et al., 2015). Recreational climbing participation in the UK is highest within sport climbing and bouldering, with an estimated

59% of those who engage in climbing doing so exclusively indoors (Association of British Climbing Walls, as cited in Berry, 2018). Indoor climbing may be more accessible to a broader range of people (Ellmer et al., 2020); research indicates that its popularity is associated with factors such as the reduced levels of risk and danger compared to outdoor climbing, the increased provision of climbing grades allowing for the sport to appeal to a broader demographic, and the reduction in geographical constraints associated with outdoor climbing (Batuev & Robinson, 2019; van Bottenburg & Salome, 2010). Recent years have seen an increase in the number of women climbing in the UK, from 29% of climbers in 2017 to 33% in 2019 (Lange, 2020). Despite this increase, many more men than women engage in climbing (Lange, 2020). Our study aimed to shed light on the reasons for this disparity, by exploring the views and experiences of 12 young women (aged 18–25) who participate in indoor climbing in the UK. We draw on Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital to explore the factors associated with their propensities to start, and continue, engaging in this leisure pursuit.

Bourdieu (1990) argues that human behaviour cannot be explained solely as the manifestation of internalised practices adopted from an individual's social environment, nor can it be entirely attributed to their capacity to make rational decisions; instead, social structures and individual agency 'exist in a dynamic, interdependent relationship' (Beames & Telford, 2013, p. 79). According to Bourdieu (1993), people enter fields within society, where they experience 'a structured system of social positions and rules that govern behaviour' (Roberts, 2016, p. 135). Thus, a field is a microcosm of society, with its own rules and values (Wacquant, 2008). Within the climbing field, centres and clubs may have their own 'rules of play' (Roberts, 2016, p. 135), whereby conformity to certain behaviours, mannerisms, climbing styles and clothing brands may hold particular relevance and value within that field (Tomlinson, 2004). Adherence to the rules and regularities of a field, through the internalisation of individual and group habitus, allows people to enhance their social standing in that field (Roberts, 2016).

The habitus is the system of dispositions that shapes our thoughts and behaviours (Bourdieu, 1990; Wacquant, 2008). Social norms are reproduced through the habitus, such that they become taken for granted (Metcalf & Lindsey, 2020). This internalisation of social patterns and norms is a vehicle for specific dispositions to emerge, which engender an individual's or group's particular ways of thinking or being (Beames & Telford, 2013; Roberts, 2016). As such, the habitus is a product of past experiences, which underpin current practices and perceptions (Bourdieu, 1990). Therefore, people's backgrounds, as well as their current social situations, influence their engagement in particular activities (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010).

Previous research has emphasised the significance of childhood experiences, and the role of the family, in the reproduction of sporting practices and thus the development of a sporting habitus (e.g. Wheeler, 2012; Wheeler & Green, 2014). Furthermore, within the family, as well as via other institutions such as schools and the media, children are exposed to cultural messages about what is deemed to be appropriately gendered behaviour (Denny, 2011), including with regard to sport and 'risky' activities, in which risk-taking behaviours and skills are associated with masculinity (Atencio et al., 2009). For example, girls may be socialised into fearing outdoor activities and risk, with their participation in unstructured physically active pursuits often framed by concerns about safety and vulnerability (Clark, 2015). Referring specifically to adventure sports, Evans and Gagnon (2019) argue that girls and women may lack role models, as women are rarely represented participating in such activities in the media. We recognise, however, that the recent debut of climbing in the Olympic Games may be a turning point in this regard. Furthermore, formative experiences of gendered norms and practices in physical education (PE) may influence how girls and women view particular activities and their own physical abilities (Metcalf & Lindsey, 2020). Preece and Bullingham (2020), in their exploration of gender stereotypes with PE teachers in the UK, report that 'entrenched gendered practices within the PE curriculum' (such as gender segregation and available activities) reinforce a gendered habitus (p. 9). Thus, the development of a gendered habitus 'is influenced by, and operates across, multiple and inter-related fields' (Metcalf, 2018, p.

683). As such, differences between men's and women's everyday experiences are likely to contribute to their perceptions of how accessible various forms of leisure are (Scraton, 1994). From a Bourdieusian perspective, this means people's everyday experiences will inform their dispositional attitudes and beliefs about the participation of women in climbing.

Gilchrist and Wheaton (2016) observe that, while increasing numbers of girls and women are participating in lifestyle sports, 'the core market has been middle-class white teenagers and young males' (p. 188). Evans and Anderson (2018) report that women have found it difficult to enter and find acceptance in the broader outdoor adventure field 'due to a variety of factors including societal gender expectations' (p. 9). With regard to snowboarding, Thorpe (2010) argues that the gendered habitus is reflected through 'assumptions that displays of physical prowess, including finely honed combinations of skill, muscular strength, aggression, toughness, and courage are desirable or "natural" male traits' (p. 194). Similar assumptions may be associated with climbing, as it too has traditionally been defined as a masculine sport, which emphasises the accumulation of various forms of capital through the adherence to typically masculine traits such as strength, muscularity and risk-taking (Appleby & Fisher, 2005; Robinson, 2008).

An individual's social position in a field is determined by the capital they accrue (Bourdieu, 1986a, 1986b). More specifically, the amount of economic (financial assets), social (membership of a group), cultural (e.g. skills and knowledge), and symbolic (prestige) 'wealth' individuals possess influences their status in the field (Pentith & McEvilly, 2018; Wacquant, 2008). In the climbing field, economic capital may allow access to club memberships and equipment. Social capital may involve the networks of relationships built through memberships of groups and clubs, while cultural capital includes the knowledge, skills, and expertise associated with particular forms of climbing. Symbolic capital, which relates to respect and status (Roberts, 2009), may include prizes, rewards or the completion of particularly difficult or risky climbing routes (Langseth, 2012).

The forms of capital individuals possess inform their habitus (Roberts, 2009). For beginners, perceptions about the skills and physique required to engage in climbing and enter the social group, along with the cost of safety equipment, may indicate that high levels of economic, social and cultural capital are required (Bourdieu, 1986a). The perceived need to invest in these forms of capital may inform the belief that the field is impenetrable and 'not for them'. On the other hand, indoor climbing may be considered more accessible (e.g. people can attend a local climbing centre, buy a day pass, rent equipment etc.), as well as more controlled and therefore less dangerous than outdoor climbing (van Bottenburg & Salome, 2010). Bourdieu's concepts allow for an investigation of how young women's acquired tastes, practices and dispositions inform their propensities to engage with indoor climbing (Roberts, 2016). The habitus is durable and transposable (Jenkins, 2013); importantly, however, it is not fixed, but can change through opportunities to build on pre-existing dispositions (Roberts, 2009). For example, there may be changes in women's dispositions towards climbing after engaging with the field for a prolonged period of time.

Our aim in this paper is to explore the factors associated with 12 young women's propensities to start, and continue, engaging in indoor rock climbing. Bourdieu's concepts can help us highlight the social contexts in which particular perceptions and dispositions become internalised and consequently shape the women's engagement in climbing (Holland-Smith, 2016). Previous research has tended to focus on women's experiences of either high-level climbing or various forms of climbing as serious leisure. For example, Appleby and Fisher (2005) explored how high-level female climbers negotiated their identities to gain acceptance in the field, while Dillely and Scraton (2010) found that understanding women's wider lives is central to explaining their dedication to climbing. These studies have provided valuable perspectives on climbing from women who are well established in the field, with an understanding of the 'rules of play' (Roberts, 2016, p. 135). Our focus on young women's initial and ongoing participation in recreational indoor climbing, specifically, may provide additional insights into the factors associated with women's experiences of starting, and continuing, to engage in climbing, in particular, as well as adventure sports more broadly.

## Methodology

The study was approved by the ethics committee of The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Life Sciences, University of Chester. Data were generated through individual semi-structured interviews, conducted by the lead author, Jack, during the summer of 2020. It is important for us to acknowledge and reflect on how Jack's positionality and 'baggage' may have influenced the study (Tynan & McEvilly, 2017). Jack is male, in his early 20s, and has participated in indoor climbing on a regular basis (approximately three times a week) since 2017. He was familiar with local climbing centres and had numerous contacts who could help with accessing and recruiting participants. The fact that Jack was a climber himself, of a similar age to the participants, may have encouraged their participation and possibly put them at ease in the interview situation, which they may not otherwise have felt, as women being interviewed by a man. Furthermore, Jack's gender, as well as his 'insider' knowledge of the climbing field, means another researcher may have had different assumptions about, and interpretations of, the data (Tynan & McEvilly, 2017). Therefore, the second author (female, late 30s, no experience of climbing), who supervised the study, acted as a 'critical friend' by, for example, encouraging Jack to explore possible alternative interpretations of the data (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

The study took place in the North West England/North Wales area and, as is common in qualitative research, featured purposeful sampling (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Participants were women aged 18–25, who had been regularly engaging in recreational climbing for at least six months (i.e. at least twice a week prior to the first COVID-19 national lockdown in the UK, announced on 23–03–20). The study was advertised on the social media pages of two local climbing centres, from which potential participants could contact Jack directly for further information. The study also featured snowball sampling, whereby some interviewees recommended further participants who also met the inclusion criteria (Gratton & Jones, 2010). When potential participants contacted Jack, they were provided with participant information sheets and consent forms. 12 women agreed to participate, and interviews were arranged for times and dates convenient for them.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews took place online. Lobe et al. (2020) argue that online interviews allow qualitative researchers 'to rise to the challenge of social distancing while maintaining our data collection efforts' (p. 6). Online interviews are not dissimilar from face-to-face interviews, as they offer many of the same research opportunities (e.g. flexibility, probing) (Salmons, 2014). The interviews were flexible and conversational, with a focus on asking open-ended questions, allowing the participants to respond in depth on the topics and issues raised, and probing for more detail where necessary (Denscombe, 2010). Each participant was asked to talk about, for example, when and how she first became interested in climbing, her thoughts and feelings during the initial sessions she attended, if and how these initial thoughts and feelings changed over time, and her views and experiences of being a woman in the climbing field. It is important to note that, while we did not specifically ask the women about their social class backgrounds or racial/ethnic identities, they appeared to be primarily middle class (on the basis of comments they made about, for example, their childhoods and universities) and white. We do not claim that our findings can be generalised to all women; rather, by providing this contextual and demographic information, we encourage readers to reflect on ways in which our results may (or may not) be transferable to other contexts or groups of participants (Smith, 2018).

The average duration of the interviews was approximately 41 minutes. They were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the lead author, who then engaged in thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2016) using NVivo. The thematic analysis process involved identifying patterns, or themes, throughout the data in order to then interpret and describe their 'meaning and importance' (Braun et al., 2016, p. 191). The first step involved the lead author reading and re-reading the transcripts multiple times, to become familiar with the data. Using NVivo's node function, he generated initial codes (such as 'masculinity' and 'marginalisation'), by highlighting key sections of

the data. He then constructed broader ‘candidate themes’ (Braun et al., 2016, p. 198), by organising these codes and combining them together, before reviewing and refining the finalised themes. The second author also read the transcripts numerous times and, as noted above, acted as a ‘critical friend’ during the refining of the analysis (Smith & McGannon, 2018). In discussing and reviewing the themes, for example, we combined what had originally been a separate theme titled ‘women’s participation in extreme sports’ with the theme titled ‘preconceptions of a masculine field’. This latter theme was one of the three finalised themes, along with ‘habitual feelings of intimidation and inferiority’ and ‘deploying and accruing “climbing capital”’. We now discuss each theme, drawing on Bourdieu’s concepts to aid our analysis. Pseudonyms are used to protect the participants’ anonymity.

## Findings and discussion

### *Preconceptions of a masculine field*

While Bethan, Kate and Kayleigh first participated in climbing during childhood, most of the participants started engaging in the activity in their late teens or early 20s. The data showed how their preconceptions of climbing informed their initial thoughts and feelings about the field. They talked about the general assumption that climbing is a ‘man’s sport’ (Kate). For example, Viv stated:

It could be seen as quite a boyish thing to do, if that makes sense. I mean, to climb up some rocks, I can see why that can be stereotypically considered a boy or man thing to do.

For April, the assumption that climbing is a ‘sport for men’ could be traced back to its historical origins:

Mountaineering societies were all male in Victorian times, women weren’t allowed [to join] so women made their own ... it is very much more of a male-dominated sport because historically, guys had a lot more opportunities to do it.

When originally established, accessibility to climbing depended on individuals’ levels of economic, cultural and symbolic capital, in order to provide an exclusive space for upper-class men (Westaway, 2013). Thus, women have not participated in climbing to the same extent as men because of historical barriers (Wigglesworth, 2021). The continued (perceived) classification of climbing as a ‘man’s field’ reflects a broadly accepted habitus amongst wider society concerning gendered sports participation, whereby sports are often dichotomously divided into ‘sports for men’ and ‘sports for women’ (Hardin & Greer, 2009). Subsequently, through socially engrained gender expectations, many women have experienced difficulty entering and finding acceptance within ‘male-oriented sports’ (Evans & Anderson, 2018; Thorpe, 2010).

The participants highlighted that these deeply entrenched gender expectations and stereotypes influenced their sporting experiences from an early age. For example, comments referring specifically to experiences of climbing in high school included:

They had a climbing wall installed in my secondary school and we got, like, one go of it a year ... whereas the lads, they had a six-week block. (Gemma)

The teacher seemed to think it was just more of a boys’ thing to do. (Jane)

Roberts et al. (2020) observe that ‘the relationship between masculinity and sports that is naturalised and reproduced in PE settings has been well-documented’ (p. 3). From a Bourdieusian perspective, through conformity to wider societal perceptions or habitual beliefs, schools ‘unknowingly help to construct, normalise, inform and define expectations of masculinity and femininity’ (Roberts et al., 2020, p. 4). These experiences reinforce young people’s habitual beliefs concerning dichotomised, gendered sports (Jenkins, 2013; Roberts, 2016), which are carried

through the teenage years and potentially have a detrimental impact on young people's long-term leisure careers (Stebbins, 2015), by influencing their propensities to engage in particular activities. Viv explained how these wider societal perceptions relate to the climbing field in particular:

We've all grown up with those kind of stereotypes drilled into us from a young age, as in, girls play with Barbies and boys go outside and play with rocks and mud and stuff like that, which is not always the case, but that's probably followed through into things like sports like climbing, which I guess could be seen as a masculine sport in comparison to other things that girls might do more of.

These deeply established dichotomous labels, categorising activities as 'for men' or 'for women', may mean 'boys ... limit their participation in stereotypical girls' sports, and girls may limit themselves from stereotypical boys' sports for fear of being stigmatized' (Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006, p. 540). Furthermore, the data indicated that women may limit themselves from participating in climbing, specifically, because it is perceived to develop 'masculine' physical characteristics. Comments included:

When you start climbing, you start developing muscles and you get sort of strong shoulders, which is not necessarily perceived as a super feminine thing. (Emily)

When I do go to the [climbing centre] my hands tend to become sore and then rip, and maybe for some people they don't see this as a feminine sport and think, oh god I'm going to look ugly after this or my hands are going to look ugly. [...] It comes across as, like, a masculine sport so, like I mentioned about the hands ripping, and it's not very ladylike. (Ashley)

These responses imply that the potential physical effects of climbing may reinforce the sport's 'masculine' label, and thus negatively impact on women's propensities to participate. In addition, the participants indicated that this 'masculine' label is reinforced through societal perceptions of climbing as a 'daunting and dangerous' sport (Gemma). As Larna and Emily explained:

I was always kind of taught, oh rock climbing is kind of, like, a really dangerous sport and if you go, you'll end up getting hurt and you'll fall off and you'll end up hurting yourself. (Larna)

It is classed as an extreme sport, which in itself is an off-putting factor, I think, more for women than for men. (Emily)

These comments imply that the labelling of climbing as an 'extreme' or 'risky' activity is more detrimental to women's propensities to participate than men's; research indicates that risk perceptions differ according to gender, with men perceiving adventure and 'extreme' sports as less risky than women do (Demirhan, 2005; Demirhan et al., 2014). Furthermore, as noted earlier, girls may be socialised into fearing risk, with their participation in certain activities often framed by concerns about safety and vulnerability (Clark, 2015). In this vein, Gemma – who explained that, as a child, she had participated in 'predominantly female-orientated hobbies' such as dancing and netball – argued that girls and women are 'expected to do softer sports that have less danger involved with them because we need to be shielded from anything that could potentially go wrong to us'. Similarly, Larna stated:

Being a girl, I'm classed as being more fragile ... they're like, oh you need to be careful because you're not that strong and it's easy for you to break yourself, type of thing, or it's easy to hurt yourself.

These responses indicate that a fear of risk had been socialised into the participants. When discussing her propensity to climb, Gemma stated: 'I just never wanted to do outdoor climbing because I just think, oh god, I'm going to hurt my fingers doing that or I'm going to cut myself'. She further explained:

I feel as though in society it is portrayed that boys can handle danger and that is a boy thing to do ... society makes females think as though we can't handle it because it's expected that we're supposed to nurture people and help people and not put ourselves in danger because that is the male job.

Gemma's response indicates that societal beliefs concerning gender and risk portray climbing as more dangerous for women than men, supporting Emily's earlier statement regarding women being put off climbing when it is labelled as an 'extreme sport'.

The data discussed so far provide an insight into possible reasons why fewer women than men participate in climbing. We now explore how the habitual beliefs developed during the participants' socialisation related to how they felt when they first entered the climbing field.

### *Habitual feelings of intimidation and inferiority*

Numerous participants reported that their preconceptions of climbing as a male-oriented field appeared to have been accurate, as they found that there were more male than female participants at the climbing centres they attended:

When I started, that was literally about, out of the whole [climbing centre], maybe four or five women there . . . and I was a little bit like, oh it is very male-orientated. (Larna)

I feel like when you do go there, the majority of people that they are guys. (Jane)

Mainly I do not see as many women – you don't see as many women climbing. (Kate)

As noted earlier, research indicates that, while the proportion of women within the indoor climbing field in the UK has risen in recent years, it is still a male-dominated activity (Lange, 2020). The participants talked about how this disparity affected their initial experiences in the field:

You just rock up and you are kind of one of the only girls there and you know it is quite hard, so I was definitely quite intimidated at first. (Emily)

I was quite nervous . . . with the massive split in gender, I felt kind of intimidated. (Bethan)

Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts, we can theorise that the feelings of intimidation the women referred to reflected the gendered habitus with which they entered the climbing field. These feelings arose due to their previous experiences in the wider context that informs beliefs about what it means to be a woman in sport and, more specifically, a 'man's sport'. Their comments supported Hardin and Shain's (2006) observation that 'a central theme in sports is male superiority and female inferiority' (p. 323). The participants felt that, as women, they would be inferior to male climbers:

I was looking at all these men doing it and I was just like, oh yeah, there's no way I'm going to be able to do that. (Gemma)

If I have ever invited a male friend to go climbing, they can already climb better than me because they are normally a lot stronger than me. (Bethan)

The idea of male superiority is legitimised in sport through the emphasis placed on the 'biological gap' between men and women (Hargreaves, 2002). This gap associates characteristics traditionally deemed to be 'masculine', such as strength, power and speed, with sporting success and has often 'been used to discriminate against women and explain their supposed inferiority' (Hargreaves, 2002, p. 285). Thus, habitual feelings of inferiority amongst women are reinforced through the emphasis placed on attributes associated with success in 'male sports' (Robinson, 2008).

The concept of physical capital may help explain these feelings. Shilling (1991) defines the development of physical capital as 'the social formation of bodies through sporting leisure and other activities in ways that express a class location and which are accorded symbolic value' (p. 654). While 'no one's aesthetics are intrinsically superior' (Roberts, 2016, p. 136), the way aesthetics are perceived through cultural tastes and habitual beliefs establishes their position as either superior or inferior. As such, it appeared that the participants' preconceptions concerning valuable forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986a) informed their habitus before entering the climbing field. Comments included:

A lot of women do sort of have this sort of deep-rooted anxiety about climbing and other sports in front of men just because of, you know, it's historical really, people taking the mick out of girls doing sports. (Kate)

Because you are surrounded by all of these kind of like chiselled men and women who are like, 'I am really strong' and then if you did come in as a beginner and have all those feelings of being a beginner, but also you were like, 'I don't look like these people, does that mean I can't climb?' (Hydie)

These comments indicate that feelings of inferiority and self-doubt may arise due to women believing they do not possess the capital needed to be successful climbers. Gorely et al. (2003) argue that opportunities to accumulate and exchange physical capital vary by gender, with differing value ascribed to what are deemed to be signifiers of masculinity and femininity. For example, muscularity may signify masculinity in a way that has broader social and cultural benefits for boys, but not girls (Gorely et al., 2003). Therefore, the participants' feelings of intimidation may have been informed by the attributes they associated with success in the wider field of sport and exercise. For example, Jane stated:

I just kept the stereotype of what the gym was like and applied that to climbing [...] I associated the gym and sports and stuff with being more of a lad atmosphere.

Within fields such as gyms, Bourdieu (1986a) would likely argue that individuals possessing high levels of muscularity and strength are assumed to be successful. This physical capital then converts to symbolic capital through the prestige associated with particular levels of strength or muscular physiques. Many participants associated the same forms of capital with the climbing field. For example, when discussing preconceived ideas about what makes a successful climber, Kim said she had assumed 'it went off how big your biceps are and how strong your back and shoulders are'.

The data indicated that this assumed male superiority had also been internalised by (some) men the participants encountered. Several women alluded to what Emily described as men's 'really amazing ability, if they see a girl climbing, to come over and try and tell them how to do it'. Responses included:

Guys would come over and be like, 'Hey, this is how you do it'. They would never say, 'Do you need help?' or 'Would you like my suggestion?' [...] I think a lot of the time guys were just being friendly, but some of the time it was definitely a lot more patronising. (April)

A lot of the time it is meant well, but, like, a lot of the time I just have a man come up to me and be like, 'You should, maybe you should do this' and I know full well I can't do it like that, but I am like, 'Thank you, that's alright'. I think maybe it's just in the way it is said, I feel a little bit patronised. (Hydie)

Within Bourdieu's theory, ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving are often field-specific; the 'habitus is both individual and collective. Every individual person develops their own instinctive dispositions but, at the same time, groups of people from the same or a similar social environment will share a similar group habitus' (Beames & Telford, 2013, p. 80). Thus, certain beliefs become 'common sense' (Bourdieu, 1989), such as the assumed biological gap contributing to differences in performance or the assumption that muscularity and strength are required to be a successful climber. However, such 'common sense' is potentially 'uncommon' in other social contexts (Beames & Telford, 2013), and open to resistance and challenge.

### *Deploying and accruing 'climbing capital'*

Gorely et al. (2003) observe that 'since the habitus is socially constructed, it is also liable to change over time' (p. 441). Despite the participants' preconceptions of climbing as a masculine field, and habitual feelings of intimidation and inferiority, they found that, in many ways, the field was different from what they expected. As Larna put it, 'the whole atmosphere ... it's just completely different from what I initially thought it would be like'. Reflecting on their initial assumptions, the participants' comments included:

I didn't think I'd like it because I have never been very strong, but I actually did really enjoy it. (Viv)

I didn't realise, like, the variety of people that are climbers . . . I had thought it was, you know, just super strong lads basically, but the more I climbed, the more I realised, you know, there were all sorts of people and I think it's a lot less scary than I thought it was going to be. (Kim)

I was always like, oh I'm not going, I can't do that, I'm not strong enough, it's a boy sport, but when I did go I found myself, oh I can actually do this and it's enjoyable. (Ashley)

The women reflected on how their assumptions about the climbing field being intimidating and a space where they would feel inferior or self-conscious often did not align with the actual practices within the field. They described climbing as 'one of the friendliest communities' (April), where people respect each other and are 'just . . . there to climb and have a nice time' (Kayleigh). Bethan said that, through climbing, she had gotten to know 'genuinely some of the loveliest people I have met', while Hydie described how:

Once I had been a few times, I kind of realised that if you smile at somebody they will smile at you and you will climb together, and I kind of realised that kind of more friendly community dynamic.

The value of particular forms of capital is context-specific (Bourdieu, 1986a); what is considered to be capital in one field may not govern success in another (Beames & Telford, 2013). When people enter a field, they may deploy the capital they bring with them, as well as try to increase their capital, in order to enhance their position in the field (Roberts, 2016). The women in this study entered the climbing field with varying amounts of 'indoor climbing capital', by which we mean the types of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital specifically relevant to, and valued within, the particular climbing field in which they were engaging. The participants reported that, contrary to their assumptions, 'masculine' traits, such as muscularity and strength, did not necessarily govern the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital in this field. They explained that climbing technique, which relies on attributes such as agility, flexibility, and balance, was a predominant form of cultural capital in the field. Comments included:

Women can get up the same routes as men, just in a different way – sometimes a bit neater. [. . .] So maybe they'll use their legs a bit more, they'll angle their body in a different position, do you know, if you think about things instead of just reaching up and grabbing and tearing your arms. (Kayleigh)

A lot of the guys that I climb with would tend to muscle through things quite a lot, whereas the ladies, like, we figure out the most economical on the muscles way . . . this is probably me being biased, but if you can climb the climb with less effort then you've climbed it better. (Kim)

These responses highlight how forms of capital are often field-specific and informed through habitual beliefs, while additionally demonstrating how new fields create the opportunity for new values and dispositions to be incorporated into the individual's habitus (Webb et al., 2002). This was exemplified by Larna, when discussing her prolonged participation in climbing (six years):

It's changed my perspective of the fact that you don't have to be this really, really strong woman to be good at climbing. Yeah, it helps a lot, but it's all about finding your own style and your own way of thinking about how you use your body and how your body moves differently to somebody else, and your mind-set.

Bourdieu would likely conclude that preconceived feelings of inferiority and intimidation formed outside, and then carried into, the climbing field may be a key factor negatively informing women's propensities to participate. However, comments such as Larna's demonstrate how, after engaging with climbing for some time, participants reported feelings of empowerment through the same experiences they once felt intimidated by. Ashley described the 'sense of achievement' she felt when climbing, because it was more 'exciting' than the gym, which she referred to as 'very boring and . . . not very challenging'. Similarly, Gemma described how she felt more comfortable and confident in the climbing field than in other exercise spaces:

The gym culture at the moment is very, if you're not hitting this certain target or you don't look like that girl off Instagram, or you don't have that perfect bum that they're all raving about at the minute. [...] I was just getting a bit down about it, whereas if I go climbing I don't really have that whole, oh I'm expected to look a certain way ... when I go climbing it's, I'm getting smaller achievements from going up the climbing grades.

Therefore, it may be argued that while traditionally climbing has been perceived as a male-dominated sport (Robinson, 2008), habitual feelings concerning this perception are changing from within the field. Larna acknowledged this, stating:

Women have become a lot more empowered by sport, because I think men have realised ... women can be very strong and it's acceptable for a woman to be strong.

Larna's reference to men's changing attitudes towards women relates to a point many participants made about their entrance into the climbing field; this was often encouraged and facilitated by men in their lives, such as their fathers (Kayleigh), brothers (Jane, Kim, Viv) or boyfriends (April, Gemma, Kate). The female climbers in Holland-Smith's (2016) study similarly reported that their connections to male climbers provided them with opportunities within the adventure climbing field. From a Bourdieusian perspective, a lack of social capital may negatively impact women's propensities to enter the climbing field, as it may be difficult for 'outsiders' to enter a new field. However, because of the participants' relationships with male 'insiders', their social capital may have facilitated their entry to the field in a way that might otherwise have been more difficult. As Viv explained, 'I would never have just rocked up at a climbing gym by myself ... I needed someone to facilitate me going, so obviously I had my brother to do that, which was really good'. Roberts (2016) argues that social capital 'belongs to individuals and members of their social networks. It does not benefit all, but just insiders at the expense of outsiders' (p. 137). Therefore, it is important to consider that not all women may have access to such capital, which may affect their propensity to participate in climbing.

The women also referred to other forms of capital associated with their initial and continuing participation. Most participants' first experiences of climbing were of bouldering. Their reasons for this related to economic and cultural capital. As Emily explained, 'I think that is pretty classic because you don't really have to learn anything, like there's no ropes or safety involved'. Emily's comment indicates that bouldering requires less cultural and economic capital than other forms of climbing. Other participants acknowledged how progression to roped climbing required higher levels of capital. Comments included:

The gear that you need to buy, it is really expensive ... so I've just sort of stuck to bouldering for now. (Jane)

I have only done bouldering at the moment. I think I would like to try climbing with the ropes and harnesses, but I don't really know anyone to show me and as I have done some research, it is quite expensive. (Ashley)

These comments illustrate how the additional expenses associated with roped climbing may negatively inform some women's propensities to engage with various forms of climbing. Additionally, roped climbing requires higher levels of cultural capital than bouldering. Like Ashley, Hydie alluded to both economic and cultural capital when describing bouldering as:

So accessible and you can hire shoes and that is all you need and that makes it a lot more diverse in terms of the people who can go, because as soon as you get into top roping ... you need actual knowledge and skills and training to do that kind of thing.

Higher levels of embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986a) enable the use of the safety equipment, along with the skills to engage with more challenging forms of climbing. Given economic and social capital are required to develop this cultural capital, it is clear that interdependencies exist amongst the different forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986a; Jenkins, 2013), all of which inform women's propensities to engage in climbing. The women in this study had (varying) access to these different aspects of 'climbing capital', which allowed them to enter the field and continue engaging in it.

## Conclusion

This paper investigated the factors associated with 12 young women's propensities to start, and continue, engaging in indoor rock climbing in the UK. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital, we explored the women's views and experiences of engaging in what has traditionally been considered a 'masculine domain'. As such, we aimed to gain an understanding of the factors informing their perceptions of climbing and its suitability and accessibility for women. The data illustrated that the women's preconceptions of climbing informed their initial thoughts and feelings about the field. The deep-rooted classification of climbing as a 'man's sport' initially facilitated feelings of intimidation and inferiority, inhibiting the women's propensity to participate. However, having been introduced to climbing (often by men, such as their fathers, brothers or boyfriends), the women re-evaluated their preconceptions of the field.

Bourdieu's concepts allowed us to analyse the women's perceptions of the practices and power relations present in the climbing field. Early forms of climbing embodied Bourdieu's (1986b) notion of distinction (Telford & Beames, 2016), allowing men to distance themselves from, and marginalise, women. Arguably, the deep-rooted entrenchment of symbolic modes of domination (Bourdieu, 1977), such as the emphasis on masculine traits, is still evident in aspects of the sport today. The women commented on the disproportionate number of men in the field and how this contributed to the continued perception of climbing as a 'masculine domain'. Aligning with Bourdieu's argument that the habitus is formed through early experiences in fundamental institutions (Bourdieu, 1989; Roberts, 2016), the participants' comments highlighted how ideas about gender norms and expectations had been established and reinforced in wider societal institutions such as families and schools. Our findings highlight how these deeply established values and beliefs about gender may contribute to women's propensities to enter the climbing field. Many participants reported initial feelings of intimidation and inferiority, because of the assumption that they would be unable to match the sporting prowess of men. Thus, some women may feel that climbing is 'not for them'.

The habitus is durable and transported into new fields people enter (Holland-Smith, 2016), but it can change over time (Gorely et al., 2003). When the participants entered the field, and continued to engage in it, they found that some of their preconceptions were actually misconceptions, and that, in many ways, the field was different from what they expected. They reported that, contrary to their assumptions, 'masculine' traits, such as muscularity and strength, did not necessarily govern the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital in the climbing field. Thus, their initial assumptions and feelings often did not reflect the practices in the field and were often misconceptions informed through their wider experiences of women in sport. Habitual beliefs and capitals are often field-specific and not necessarily easily transferable to new contexts (Roberts, 2016), which may explain why many participants were surprised at both the practices and resources available to them upon entering the climbing field. In particular, their comments indicated that they accrued social and cultural capital by developing networks of relationships, along with climbing skills and techniques, which gave them a sense of achievement and enjoyment they did not experience during other physical activities (e.g. going to the gym).

Mitten (2018) reminds us that 'women are diverse' (p. 24) and 'there is not a single story' (p. 23). Thus, it is important to again emphasise that we do not claim that our findings are representative of all young women's experiences. Gagnon et al. (2016) highlight financial barriers to participating in climbing, as well as a lack of racial/ethnic diversity in the field. As noted earlier, our participants appeared to be primarily middle class and white. They had access to various forms of capital (e.g. social and economic), which facilitated their entry to, and continued engagement in, the climbing field. Other women (e.g. those from working class backgrounds, women of colour, disabled women) may not necessarily have access to the levels of capital that increased the participants' propensities to engage with this activity. As such, not all women may be able – or indeed want – to engage in climbing because it may seem inaccessible or 'not for them'. It may be valuable for future research to

explore the perspectives of women who view climbing in this way, either on the basis of preconceptions of the field or experiences they have had within it. Furthermore, following Wigglesworth (2021), we suggest that future research might adopt intersectional perspectives, and explore the views and experiences of a broader range of participants, in order ‘to account for more diversity and complexity’ with the aim of ‘generating possibilities for change’ (p. 3).

Indoor climbing may be more accessible than traditional climbing, in terms of both the cost and the perception that it is less risky (van Bottenburg & Salome, 2010). Furthermore, climbing’s recent inclusion in the Olympic Games may play a role in altering perceptions of the sport. Increased visibility of women in the field may help break down deep-rooted assumptions about climbing and potentially influence women’s propensities to engage in it. Climbing appears to be becoming a more inclusive and representative sport, with increased numbers of women engaging in it, and with indoor climbing in particular being accessible to people of various abilities and ages (Ellmer et al., 2020). However, our findings highlight that this is a gradual process that is not yet complete.

## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the participants for taking part in the study. We are also grateful to the reviewers and the editorial team for the constructive feedback and advice we received during the peer review process.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Notes on contributors

*Jack Ryan Hewitt* completed a BSc in Sport and Exercise Sciences and an MSc in the Sociology of Sport and Exercise at the University of Chester.

*Nollaig McEvilly* is a senior lecturer in the sociology of sport and exercise at the University of Chester.

## ORCID

Nollaig McEvilly  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8628-4136>

## References

- Appleby, K. M., & Fisher, L. A. (2005). ‘Female energy at the rock’: A feminist exploration of female rock climbers. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 14(2), 10–23. <https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.14.2.10>
- Atencio, M., Beal, B., & Wilson, C. (2009). The distinction of risk: Urban skateboarding, street habitus and the construction of hierarchical gender relations. *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 1(1), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19398440802567907>
- Batuev, M., & Robinson, L. (2019). Organizational evolution and the Olympic Games: The case of sport climbing. *Sport in Society*, 22(10), 1674–1690. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2018.1440998>
- Beames, S., & Telford, J. (2013). Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus, field and capital in rock climbing. In E. C. J. Pike & S. Beames (Eds.), *Outdoor adventure and social theory* (pp. 77–87). Routledge.
- Berry, N. (2018, July 5). *Social climbers – The evolving indoor climbing industry*. UKClimbing. [https://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/features/social\\_climbers\\_-\\_the\\_evolution\\_indoor\\_climbing\\_industry-10953](https://www.ukclimbing.com/articles/features/social_climbers_-_the_evolution_indoor_climbing_industry-10953)
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986b). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1989). Social space and symbolic power. *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), 14–25. <https://doi.org/10.2307/202060>
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *Sociology in question*. Sage.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986a). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

- Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise research. In B. Smith & A. C. Sparkes (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise* (pp. 191–205). Routledge.
- Bunn, M. (2017). 'I'm gonna do this over and over and over forever!': Overlapping fields and climbing practice. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 52(5), 584–597. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690215609785>
- Clark, S. (2015). Running into trouble: Constructions of danger and risk in girls' access to outdoor space and physical activity. *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(8), 1012–1028. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2013.866548>
- Demirhan, G., Asci, F. H., Kangalgil, M., & Saracbası, O. (2014). Perception of risk and attractiveness of extreme sports among Turkish university students. *Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 25(1), 11–22.
- Demirhan, G. (2005). Mountaineers' risk perception in outdoor-adventure sports: A study of sex and sports experience. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 100(3), 1155–1160. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.100.3c.1155-1160>
- Denny, K. E. (2011). Gender in context, content, and approach: Comparing gender messages in Girl Scout and Boy Scout handbooks. *Gender & Society*, 25(1), 27–47. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243210390517>
- Denscombe, M. (2010). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects* (4th ed.). Open University Press.
- Dilley, R. E., & Scraton, S. J. (2010). Women, climbing and serious leisure. *Leisure Studies*, 29(2), 125–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360903401927>
- Ellmer, E., Rynne, S., & Enright, E. (2020). Learning in action sports: A scoping review. *European Physical Education Review*, 26(1), 263–283. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X19851535>
- Evans, K., & Anderson, D. M. (2018). 'It's never turned me back': Female mountain guides' constraint negotiation. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 21(1), 9–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2016.1250649>
- Evans, K., & Gagnon, R. J. (2019). A structural model exploring gender differences in perceived constraints to competition climbing. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 22(4), 444–462. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2018.1534598>
- Gagnon, R. J., Stone, G. A., Garst, B. A., & Arthur-Banning, S. (2016). Competition climbing: From leisure pursuit to lifestyle sport. *Journal of Unconventional Parks, Tourism & Recreation Research*, 6(1), 2–12.
- Gilchrist, P., & Wheaton, B. (2016). Lifestyle and adventure sports among youth. In K. Green & A. Smith (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of youth sport* (pp. 186–200). Routledge.
- Gorely, T., Holroyd, R., & Kirk, D. (2003). Muscularity, the habitus and the social construction of gender: Towards a gender-relevant physical education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 24(4), 429–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690301923>
- Gratton, C., & Jones, I. (2010). *Research methods for sports studies* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Hall, J., & Doran, A. (2020). *Researching women in mountaineering*. York St John University.
- Hardin, M., & Greer, J. D. (2009). The influence of gender-role socialization, media use and sports participation on perceptions of gender-appropriate sports. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 32(2), 207–226.
- Hardin, M., & Shain, S. (2006). 'Feeling much smaller than you know you are': The fragmented professional identity of female sports journalists. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 23(4), 322–338. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07393180600933147>
- Hargreaves, J. (2002). *Sporting females: Critical issues in the history and sociology of women's sports*. Routledge.
- Holland-Smith, D. (2016). 'All the places we were not supposed to go': A case study of formative class and gender habitus in adventure climbing. *Sport, Education and Society*, 21(8), 1176–1192. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2014.994177>
- Jenkins, R. (2013). *Pierre Bourdieu*. Routledge.
- Lange, D. (2020, February 12). *Gender distribution of regular independent climbers in the UK 2017-2019*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1084915/gender-distribution-of-regular-independent-climbers-in-the-uk>
- Langseth, T. (2012). B.A.S.E. jumping – Beyond the thrills. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 9(3), 155–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2012.11687895>
- Lobe, B., Morgan, D., & Hoffman, K. A. (2020). Qualitative data collection in an era of social distancing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920937875>
- Metcalfe, S. N., & Lindsey, I. (2020). Gender trends in young people's participation in active lifestyles: The need for a gender-neutral narrative. *European Physical Education Review*, 26(2), 535–551. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X19874095>
- Metcalfe, S. (2018). Adolescent constructions of gendered identities: The role of sport and (physical) education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 23(7), 681–693. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2018.1493574>
- Mitten, D. (2018). Let's meet at the picnic table at midnight. In T. Gray & D. Mitten (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of women and outdoor learning* (pp. 19–34). Palgrave Macmillan.
- O'Connor, J., & Penney, D. (2021). Informal sport and curriculum futures: An investigation of the knowledge, skills and understandings for participation and the possibilities for physical education. *European Physical Education Review*, 27(1), 3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X20915937>
- Pentith, R., & McEville, N. (2018). 'Just stretch it out and try to dance': Young Irish dancers' views and experiences of pain and injury. *Graduate Journal of Sport, Exercise & Physical Education Research*, 10, 12–25. [https://www.worc.ac.uk/giseper/documents/Views\\_and\\_experiences\\_of\\_pain\\_and\\_injury.pdf](https://www.worc.ac.uk/giseper/documents/Views_and_experiences_of_pain_and_injury.pdf)

- Preece, S., & Bullingham, R. (2020). Gender stereotypes: The impact upon perceived roles and practice of in-service teachers in physical education. *Sport Education and Society*, 1–13. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2020.1848813>
- Quarmby, T., & Dagkas, S. (2010). Children's engagement in leisure time physical activity: Exploring family structure as a determinant. *Leisure Studies*, 29(1), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360903242560>
- Roberts, J. S., Gray, S., & Camacho Miñano, M. J. (2020). Exploring the PE contexts and experiences of girls who challenge gender norms in a progressive secondary school. *Curriculum Studies in Health and Physical Education*, 11(1), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25742981.2019.1696688>
- Roberts, K. (2009). *Key concepts in sociology*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roberts, K. (2016). *Social theory, sport, leisure*. Routledge.
- Robinson, V. (2008). *Everyday masculinities and extreme sport: Male identity and rock climbing*. Berg.
- Salmons, J. (2014). *Qualitative online interviews: Strategies, design, and skills*. Sage.
- Schmalz, D. L., & Kerstetter, D. L. (2006). Girlie girls and manly men: Children's stigma consciousness of gender in sports and physical activities. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 38(4), 536–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2006.11950091>
- Scraton, S. (1994). The changing world of women and leisure: Feminism, 'postfeminism' and leisure. *Leisure Studies*, 13(4), 249–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614369400390201>
- Shilling, C. (1991). Educating the body: Physical capital and the production of social inequalities. *Sociology*, 25(4), 653–672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038591025004006>
- Smith, B., & McGannon, K. R. (2018). Developing rigor in qualitative research: Problems and opportunities within sport and exercise psychology. *International Review of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 11(1), 101–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1750984X.2017.1317357>
- Smith, B. (2018). Generalizability in qualitative research: Misunderstandings, opportunities and recommendations for the sport and exercise sciences. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 10(1), 137–149. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2017.1393221>
- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. Routledge.
- Stebbins, R. A. (2015). *Serious leisure: A perspective for our time*. Transaction.
- Telford, J., & Beames, S. (2016). Bourdieu and alpine mountaineering: The distinction of high peaks, clean lines and pure style. In B. Humberstone, H. Prince, & K. A. Henderson (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of outdoor studies* (pp. 482–490). Routledge.
- Thorpe, H. (2010). Bourdieu, gender reflexivity, and physical culture: A case of masculinities in the snowboarding field. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 34(2), 176–214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723510367770>
- Tomlinson, A. (2004). Pierre Bourdieu and the sociological study of sport: Habitus, capital and field. In R. Giulianotti (Ed.), *Sport and modern social theorists* (pp. 161–172). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tynan, R., & McEvilly, N. (2017). 'No pain, no gain': Former elite female gymnasts' engagements with pain and injury discourses. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 9(4), 469–484. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2017.1323778>
- van Bottenburg, M., & Salome, L. (2010). The indoorisation of outdoor sports: An exploration of the rise of lifestyle sports in artificial settings. *Leisure Studies*, 29(2), 143–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360903261479>
- Wacquant, L. (2008). Pierre Bourdieu. In R. Stones (Ed.), *Key sociological thinkers* (pp. 261–277). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Warren, K. (2015). Gender in outdoor studies. In B. Humberstone, H. Prince, & K. A. Henderson (Eds.), *Routledge international handbook of outdoor studies* (pp. 360–368). Routledge.
- Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu*. Sage.
- Westaway, J. (2013). The origins and development of mountaineering and rock climbing tourism in the Lake District, ca. 1800–1914. In J. K. Walton & J. Wood (Eds.), *The making of a cultural landscape: The English Lake District as tourist destination, 1750–2010* (pp. 155–180). Routledge.
- Wheeler, S., & Green, K. (2014). Parenting in relation to children's sports participation: Generational changes and potential implications. *Leisure Studies*, 33(3), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2012.707227>
- Wheeler, S. (2012). The significance of family culture for sports participation. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(2), 235–252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690211403196>
- Wigglesworth, J. (2021). The cultural politics of naming outdoor rock climbing routes. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 1–24. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2021.1949736>
- Woollings, K. Y., McKay, C. D., & Emery, C. A. (2015). Risk factors for injury in sport climbing and bouldering: A systematic review of the literature. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 49(17), 1094–1099. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2014-094372>